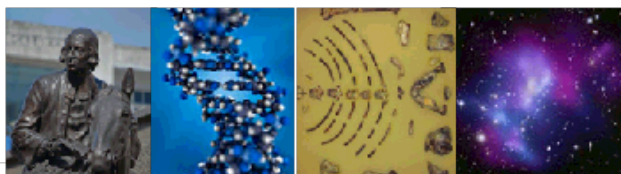


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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September 29, 2013

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

The month of September has been a very busy month for me. A number of opportunities to engage in science and religion related activities have developed and will continue through the remainder of the fall. Particularly noteworthy is the six week course being given by Phillip Clayton that was highlighted in last month's newsletter. I have been able to view the first two sessions and can attest to the quality of the presentation, though I have to admit the video recording might have been better. Details on how to get to the sessions are listed below but I want to invite you all to check it out. As always, if you have any articles that we can share, let us know. We can post them on the website and include them in next month's newsletter. You may email us at WesleyNexus@aol.com.

God Bless,

Rick Barr, WesleyNexus

Six Week Course in Science and Religion

Over 40 people have signed up from all across the country to participate in the internet course given by Dr. Philip Clayton and Tripp Fuller. The format is very informal and conversational, even a bit irreverent, in a good way. There are no props other than some Powerpoint slides and conversation between



Tripp Fuller and Philip Clayton. But that is enough. The first course provides an overview of the broad topic of science and religion and addresses some of the popular misconceptions. The second session talks about physics and cosmology and their relationship with religious topics. Each class is takes an hour with an additional half hour given to questions by Fuller and the Claremont students attending in person. The first session can be viewed [here](#). If you find it worthwhile, sign up for the course at [MissionSoulutions](#). There is a \$30 cost for the six sessions.

It is interesting to note that the California - Nevada United Methodist Church Conference has advertised the course in their recent newsletter.

Alert for AAR/SBL attendees

Just a reminder that the 2013 meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of

Biblical Literature are scheduled for the Baltimore Convention Center beginning on November 22. In conjunction with the 200th Anniversary of Old Otterbein Church (in downtown Baltimore next to the Convention Center, 112 W. Conway Street), WesleyNexus will be organizing a free seminar and special presentation on the evening of Thursday November 21st. The discussion topic will be “Is Evolution the Enemy of Faith?” Panelists will include WesleyNexus Advisory Board member Dr. Thomas Jay Oord, Professor of Theology at Northwestern Nazarene University, Craig A. Boyd, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University, and Mark A. Mann, Associate Professor of Theology at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. The session will begin with a light supper at 6:00 p.m., and the program runs from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The historic church is within one block walking distance from the convention hotels, and all AAR/SBL members are welcome, as well as members of the public. More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters. Meanwhile, please share this information with anyone planning to attend the AAR/SBL meetings so that flights can be arranged to arrive at BWI on Nov 21st.

atom + Eve Project: Using Science in Pastoral Ministry

For the past two years, the Washington Theological Consortium has presented a series of science and religion seminars under the banner of the atom + Eve Project. Funded by the John Templeton Foundation, all 16 videos, audio feeds and PDF texts are now available on the web at no cost. The materials can be found at www.atompluseve.com.

atom + Eve: Using Science in Pastoral Ministry

The Central Pennsylvania Forum for Religion and Science

The Central Pennsylvania Forum for Religion and Science, under the direction of Dr. Edward B. (“Ted”) Davis, Professor of the History of Science, will once again be sponsoring a variety of events, all intended to help promote better understanding of religion and science—including medicine and social science—in the central Pennsylvania region. They will continue the college’s established tradition of hosting speakers who represent diverse religious and disciplinary perspectives. Their schedule for the current school year can be found [here](#).



The New Science of the Mind by Eric Kandel

Eric Kandel, Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine, has written a recent article in the NY Times pushing back against critics who claim that psychiatry is a “semi-science” and lack empirical foundations. Kandel claims that the contrary is true. In fact, “the result of such work is a new, unified science of mind that uses the combined power of cognitive psychology and neuroscience to examine the great remaining mysteries of mind: how we think, feel and experience ourselves as conscious human beings. In years to come, this increased understanding of the physical workings of our brain will provide us with important insight into brain disorders, whether psychiatric or neurological. But if we persevere, it



will do even more: it will give us new insights into who we are as human beings.” You can read the complete article [here](#).

Worlds Most Unusual Churches

Last month I included the beautiful, natural vistas created by the Rainbow Mountains in China. This month I want to highlight the accomplishment of human imagination in sacred architecture.



The Huffington Post has a slide show of 50 unusual churches. Some you may have seen such as the Airforce Academy Chapel. Others, such as the See-Through Church in Brussels are probably know only to those that follow architecture. All of them reflect the richness of artistic creativity wedded with the a deep knowledge of the physical world. The images can be found [here](#).

Whitehead’s Idea of God by Jay McDaniel with images by Rachel Ribondo-Gros

For those of you who are drawn to the process view of the sacred as described by Alfred North Whitehead, Jay McDaniel with the help of images by Rachel Ribondo-Gros has written a beautifully poetic text explicating God’s relationship to the world. He concludes with a quote from Whitehead’s Process and Reality: “For the kingdom of heaven is with us today ... the love of God for the world. It is the particular providence for particular occasions. What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion - the fellow-sufferer who understands.” You can find the article [here](#) at JesusJazzBuddhism.org.



Whitehead's Idea of God

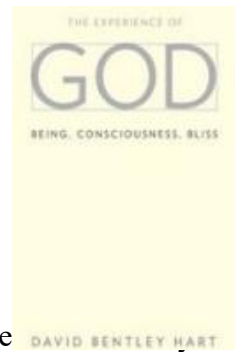
Interview with Pope Francis in America Magazine

Though the interview with Pope Francis is not really in the domain of science and religion, it was such a significant piece of journalism that we at WesleyNexus want everyone to have a chance to read it. So here it is: <http://www.americamagazine.org/pope-interview>.

Do Intelligent People Need Religion by Brett Beasley

A new study led by University of Rochester psychologist Miron Zuckerman has, according to some, provided

substantiating evidence that atheists are more intelligent than religious people. Brett Beasley in his recent article in ReligiousDispatches.org says not so fast and uses the study as a foil to discuss the new book by David Bentley Hart. He introduces Hart with the following quote: “the absolutely convinced atheist” is not an uncompromising intellectual, but rather “someone who has failed to notice something very obvious... One of the more insidious aspects of today’s public debates over belief and unbelief is that they are often an illusion that both sides are using the same words in the same way,” writes Hart. Indeed, his latest work is a simple plea for those who enter the debates to approach religion with a real awareness of what most of the major world faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Vedantic and Bhaktic Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism) actually mean when they use the word God.”



Having struggled a few years ago with Hart’s monumental The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth, I am happy to report that my reading of the first third of the book has been a wonderful experience. Hart has a firm grasp of the issues related to human mind, consciousness and spirit. He uses his deep knowledge of the early Christian tradition to lay out a rich and rewarding presentation that challenges the all too common sense of superiority of our secular culture. In short, Hart claims that our we are missing something right in front of us but that we are unable to see. He does not so much as present an argument as offer clear conceptual elucidation of what we mean by God. With this effort, he opens up opportunities for discussion and understanding. He may not necessarily convince others but at least he presents a clear, rigorous and plausible understanding of who God is. That alone is worth the time spent. And it just may be that atheists are not all that smart, at least when it comes to understanding God. The article can be found [here](#).

